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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 002348

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SUBJECT: EGYPT'S NUCLEAR POWER PLANT PLANS SUBJECT TO DELAYS

REF: CAIRO 1176

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs Donald A. Blome for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C/NF) Main Points: -- Egypt's first commercial scale reactor is officially slated to come on line in 2020, with three more to be in operation by 2030.
2. (SBU) In a recent discussion with Econoff, NPPA Chairman Ibrahim said Egypt's current nuclear development posture is a function of a "national security strategy."
3. (C/NF) As a result of this process, the SEC, according to Ibrahim, set a target date of 2020 for Egypt's first commercial scale reactor to be in operation.
4. (C) Ibrahim advised that he will recommend to "national authorities" by the end of 2009 a site and construction design type for the nuclear power plant.
5. (C/NF) Ibrahim said the main opposition to the El Daba coastal site comes from Egyptian businessmen interested in touristic development of the area.
6. (C/NF) Ibrahim said he would recommend only "proven" reactor designs, with operational histories of five or more years and exclude all "new" designs.
7. (C/NF) Ibrahim said he expects the pace of civilian nuclear power development to be much slower than most GOE officials estimate. He anticipates a long process.
8. (C/NF) Ibrahim explained that Egypt is at an especially large disadvantage with regard to "human capacity," lacking in trained professional staff.
9. (C/NF) Ibrahim thus reasoned that the first three nuclear plants Egypt will need to be turn-key projects, i.e., with design and construction by foreign firms.